

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000427

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/21/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#) [HOSTAGES](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 30

REF: LAGOS 417

Classified By: Acting Political/Economic Chief Shannon Ross
for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

Hostage Welfare Update

1. (C) Conoff received a call from a hostage-taker at the militant camp this afternoon, who allowed Conoff to speak to Cody Oswalt. Oswalt said he was fine, but he is still separated from the other two hostages. Oswalt asked Conoff to relay his wellbeing to his family, and also seemed in better spirits. The militant caller repeatedly called for USG and HMG participation to improve Delta conditions, claiming the GON was unreliable. The caller confirmed FNDIC member George Timinimi is "the right candidate" when asked if the intermediaries introduced by the Delta State negotiating team were legitimate, and agreed to send a contact telephone number via text message so Conoff could be sure he was speaking to the correct party. The caller also said the hostages were in good condition and "adding weight," and would be released in the next one or two days.

Hostage Negotiations

2. (C) Negotiators are waiting for the hostage-takers' third party intermediaries to go to the creeks and convey the statements by Ambassador Campbell and the British High Commissioner presented in the meetings Monday and Tuesday (reftel). No additional meetings or other activities are planned until some response is received.

3. (C) British High Commissioner Richard Grozney reissued a statement affirming HMG agreement to participate in some role in discussions toward long-term improvement in the Niger Delta.

4. (C) Shell representatives expressed concern over misstatements in the press about USG and HMG commitment to Niger Delta development (see paragraph 7) and requested USG and HMG release statements clarifying our position, to which Poloff replied any response to the articles would be provided back-channel, and no public response would be released. Shell sources also claimed President Obasanjo has endorsed Senator Diffa (reftel) as an intermediary to the hostage-takers.

Energy Update

5. (C) There were no significant energy developments.

Military Update

6. (C) There were no significant military developments.

Media Update

7. (SBU) Print media ran a range of exaggerated accounts of Tuesday's meeting in Warri. Vanguard ran a detailed account of the meeting, but included a fictitious quote attributed to a USG attendee: "We are handicapped now because our people are still being kept in the creeks but we are appealing that the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) should assist us to go back to the militants and tell them that we are willing to be involved in liberating them because we know that they are suffering." Punch went further, stating the USG and HMG "...formally took charge of the negotiation for

the freedom of their nationals being held by Ijaw militants in Delta State."

Consular Update

18. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits. One mission Conoff and one FEST member are in Warri monitoring negotiations and prepared to assist with repatriation. The UK also has a consular officer in Warri to monitor negotiations and assist with repatriation. The head of Shell Security is on standby for repatriation assistance.
HOWE